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Planning System Needs to go Back to the Drawing Board, says Business

Business leaders have condemned the state of the UK's planning system in a survey of public services, released today. Of 11 public services administered by central or local government, the planning system came in for particular criticism from members of the Institute of Directors (IoD). The poll also revealed a high level of discontent with the current condition of roads and highways.

Geraint Day, Policy Analyst at the IoD, said:

"Businesses seem to be highly frustrated with local authority-administered planning. Only 16 per cent of respondents to our survey expressed satisfaction with the system, while over two-thirds had seen no improvement over the last three years."

Coming out on top of the poll was the Fire and Rescue Service, with 74% of employers rating the emergency service as good or very good. The education system, NHS and Police Service all received mediocre approval ratings.

There was also lacklustre support for the work of the devolved administrations. Around 40% of respondents were unhappy with the standard of services provided by the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland Administration. A similar number expressed disappointment with the service standards of the English Regional Development Agencies.

Geraint Day, said

"This survey revealed vastly differing standards of service amongst key public services. Overall, however, there appears to be widespread dissatisfaction with public services in general, with only the Fire Service being universally well-regarded. Local government administered services such as planning and business rates come in for the most damning criticism.

"The Government should take heed. As far as business is concerned there is a feeling there is still a long road to travel before we see an improvement in public services."

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Notes to editors

1. The survey of 513 IoD members, conducted in December 2003, is reported in an article for the Institute's newsletter, IoD News.
2. For a pdf version of the article, contact the IoD Press Office on 020 745 13264 or press@iod.com
3. The IoD (Institute of Directors), founded by Royal Charter in 1903, is a non-party political organisation with upwards of 54,000 members in the United Kingdom. Membership includes directors from right across the business spectrum - from media to manufacturing, e-business to the public and voluntary sectors. Members include CEOs of large corporations as well as entrepreneurial directors of start-up companies.
4. The IoD offers a wide range of business services which include business centre facilities (including six regional centres), conferences, networking events, issues-led guides and literature as well as information services and free access to a comprehensive business library and enquiry service. The IoD places great emphasis on director development and has established a certified qualification for directors - Chartered Director - as well as running specific board-level and director-level training and individual career mentoring programmes.
5. In addition, the IoD provides an effective voice to represent the interests of its members to government and key opinion-formers at the highest levels. These include ministers, constituency MPs, Select Committee members and senior civil servants. IoD policies and views are actively promoted to the national, regional and trade media.

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